TREAT 'EM ROUGH

Letters from

JACK *the* KAISER KILLER

by RING W. LARDNER

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By

RING W. LARDNER
AUTHOR OF
My Four Weeks in France, Gullible's Travels, Etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY

FRANK CRERIE

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LETTERS FROM

JACK THE KAISER KILLER

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CAMP GRANT, Sept. 23.

FRIEND AL: Well Al I am writeing this in the recreation room at our barracks and they's about 20 other of the boys writeing letters and I will bet some of the letters is rich because half of the boys can't talk english to say nothing about writeing letters and etc. We got a fine bunch in my Co. Al and its a cinch I won't never die in the trenchs because I will be murdered in my bed before we ever get out of here only they don't call it bed in the army.

They call it bunk and no wonder.

Well Al I have been here since Wed. night and now it is Sunday and this is the first time I have not felt sick since we got here and even at that my left arm is so sore it is pretty near killing me where I got vacinated. Its a good thing I am not a left hander Al or I couldn't get a ball up to the plate but of course I don't have to think of that now because I am out of baseball now and in the big game but at that I guess a left hander could get along just as good with a sore arm because I never seen one of them yet that could break a pain of glass with their fast

ball and if they didn't have all the luck in the world they would be rideing around the country in a side door Pullman with all their baggage on.

Speaking about baseball Al I suppose you seen where the White Sox have cinched the penant and they will be splitting the world serious money while I am drawing $30.00 per mo. from the Govmt. but 50 yrs. from now the kids will all stop me on the st. and make me tell them what hotel we stayed at in Berlin and when Cicotte and Faber and Russell begins to talk about what they done to the Giants everybody will have themself paged and walk out.

Well Al a lot of things come off since the last time I wrote to you. We left Chi Wed. noon and you ought to seen the crowd down to the Union station to bid us good by. Everybodys wifes and sisters and mothers was there and they was all crying in 40 different languages and the women wasn't allowed through the gates so farewell kisses was swapped between the iron spokes in the gates and some of the boys was still getting smacked yet when the train started to pull out and it looked like a bunch of them would get left and if they had I'll say their wifes would of been in tough luck.

Of course wife Florrie and little son Al was there and Florrie was all dressed up like a horse and I bet a lot of them other birds wished they was in my

Florrie was all dressed up like a horse and I bet a lot of them other birds wished they was in my shoes (p. 10).

shoes when the kissing battle begun. Well Al we both blubbered a little but Florrie says she mustn't cry to hard or she would have to paternize her own beauty parlors because crying makes a girl look like she had pitched a double header in St. Louis or something. But I don't know if you will believe it or not but little Al didn't even wimper. How is that for a game bird and only 3 yrs. old?

Well Al some alderman or somebody had got a lot of arm bandages made for us with the words Kaiser Killers printed on them and they was also signs stuck on the different cars on the train like Berlin or Bust and etc. and the Stars and Strips was flying from the back platforms so we certainly looked like regular soldiers even without no uniforms and I guess if Van Hindburg and them could of seen us you wouldn't of needed a close line no more to take their chest measure.

Well all our bunch come from the south side and of course some of them was fans and the first thing you know they had me spotted and they all wanted to shake hands and I had a smile for all of them because I have got it doped out that we are all fighting for Uncle Sam and a man ought to forget who you are and what you are and be on friendly turns with everybody till after the war.

Well Al they had told us to not bring much bag-

gage and some of the boys come without even their tooth brush but they hadn't some of them forgot to fetch a qt. bottle and by the time we got outside of the city limits the engineer didn't have to blow his whistle to leave people know we were comeing. Somebody had a cornet and another fellow had a trombone and a couple of them had mouth organs and we all sung along with them and we sung patriotic songs like Jonah Vark and Over There and when they started on the Star Spangled Banner the guy I was setting along side of him hollered for them to not play that one and I thought he was a pro German or something and I was going to bust him but somebody asked him why shouldn't they play it and he says because he couldn't stand up and he wasn't the only one either Al.

The train stopped at a burg called Aurora and a bunch of the boys needed air so they got off, some of them head first and one bird layed down on the station platform and says he had changed his mind about going to war and he was going to sleep there a while and catch the first train back to Chi so we picked him up and throwed him back on our train and told him we would have the engineer back up to Chi and drop him off and he says O. K. and of course the train started ahead again but he didn't know if we was going or comeing or looping the loop.

Well the trombone blower finely blowed himself to a nap and while he was asleep a little guy snuck the trombone away from him and says "Look here boys I am willing to give my life for Uncle Sam but I am not going to die to no trombone music." So he throwed the trombone out of the window without opening the window and the guy woke up that owned it and the next thing you know the Kaiser Killers was in their first battle.

Well Al by the time we got to Camp Grant some of the boys looked like they was just comeing from the war instead of just going and I guess I was about the only one that was O. K. because I know how to handle it but I had eat some sandwiches that a wop give me on the train and they must of been poisoned or something because when I got off everything looked kind of blured.

We was met by a bunch of officers in uniform. The guy that had throwed the trombone away had both eyes swelled shut and a officer had to lead him to the head quarters and I heard the officer ask him if he was bringing any liquor into the camp and he says yes all he could carry, but the officer meant did he have a bottle of it and he says No he had one but a big swede stuck his head in front of it and it broke.

Over to the head quarters they give us a couple

of blankets a peace and then they split us up into Cos. and showed us our barracks and they said we looked like we needed sleep and we better go to bed right after supper because we would have to get down to hard work the next A.M. and I was willing to go to bed without no supper after eating them dam sandwichs and the next time them wops trys to slip me something to eat or drink I will hang one on their jaw.

Well Al the buggle has blowed for mess which is what they call the meals and you would know why if you eat some of them so I will close for this time and save the rest for the next time and my address is Co. C. 399th. Infantry, Camp Grant, Ill.

Your Pal, JACK.

CAMP GRANT, Sept. 24.

FRIEND AL: Well Al they give us some work out today and I am pretty tired but they's no use going to bed till 9 o'clock which is the time they blow the buggle for the men to shut up their noise. They do everything by buggles here. They get you up at a quarter to 6 which is first call and you got to dress in 15 minutes because they blow the assembly buggle at 6 and then comes the revelry buggle and then you eat breakfast and so on till 11 P. M. when they blow the taps buggle and that means everybody has got to put their lights out and go to sleep just as if a man couldn't go to sleep without music and any way a whole lot of the boys go to sleep before 11 because with so many of us here how could the officers tell if we waited for the buggle or didn't wait for it?

Well Al about all we done the first 3 days was try and get the place to looking like something because the men that built the buildings was to lazy to clean up after themself and I wouldn't of minded only for feeling so bad all day Thursday on acct. of that sandwich and Friday I felt rotten because a Dr. vacinated me and fixed me up so as I can't catch small pox or tyford fever and

I would rather have the both of them the same day then have that bird work on me again.

Thursday A.M. after breakfast a bunch of us went to the Drs. and they give us a physical examination and before the Dr. examined me he says "Well is they anything the matter with you outside of a headache?" So I said "How do you know I got a headache" and he says because they was a epidemic of them in the camp. Well Al I could of told him why only of course I wouldn't squeel on the rest of the boys so all I told him was about me eating that sandwich and he says all the boys must of eat them and that shows how much them wise Drs. knows.

Well of course he didn't find nothing the matter with me physicly and he says I was a fine specimen and the next place I went was to the head quarters or something where they give us our uniforms and you ought to see me in mine Al only the shoes is 6 sizes to big and I made a holler about it but the man says they wouldn't be so big after I had wore them a while. They must be fine shoes that will srink Al because all the shoes I ever seen the more you wear them they get bigger. They give us each 2 pair shoes one to march in with cleats on the bottom and a hat and a hat cord and 5 pair sox and 2 shirts and a belt and 3 suits under wear and 2 cocky suits.

And we had to tell our family history to a

personal officer that writes down all about you on a card and what kind of work you done before so if the General or somebody tears their pants they won't have to chase all over the camp and page a taylor because they can look at the cards and find out who use to be a taylor and send for him to sow them up.

A lot of the boys give this officer a song and dance about how good they can drive a car and etc. so they can get a soft snap like driveing one of the officers cars and I could of got some kind of a snap only I come here to be a soldier and fight Germans and not mend their pants.

The officer asked me my name and age and etc. and what I done in civil life so I said "I guess you don't read the sporting page." So he says "Oh are you a fighter or something?" So I said "I am a fighter now but I use to pitch for the White Sox." So then he asked me what I done before that so I told him I was with Terre Haute in the Central League and Comiskey heard about me and bought me and then he sent me out to Frisco for a while and I stood that league on their head and then he got me back and I been with him about 3 years.

So the officer asked me if I ever done anything besides pitch so I told him about the day I played the outfield in Terre Haute when Burns and Stewart shut their eyes going after a fly ball and

their skulls come together and it sounded like a freight wreck and they was both layed out so I and Lefty Danvers took their place and in the 8th. inning I come up with 2 on and hit a curve ball off big Jack Rowan and only for the fence that ball wouldn't of made no stops this side of Indpls.

So then the officer says "Yes but didn't you do something when you wasn't playing ball?" so I told him a pitcher don't have to do nothing only set on the bench or hit fungos once in a while or warm up when it looks like the guy in there is beggining to wobble. So he says "Well I guess I will put you down as a pitcher and when we need one in a hurry we will know where to find one." But I don't know when they would need a pitcher Al unless it was to throw one of them bombs and believe me when it comes to doing that I will make a sucker out of the rest of these birds because if my arm feels O.K. they's nobody got better control and if they tell me to stick one in a German's right eye that is where I will put it and not in their stomach or miss them all together like I was a left hander or something.

Well Al we done a little training Friday and Saturday but today was the first day we realy went to it. First of course we got up and dressed and then they was 10 minutes of what they call upseting exercises and then come breakfast which

Shut their eyes going after a fly ball, their skulls came together and it sounded like a freight wreck (p. 20).

was oatmeal and steak and bread and coffee. The way it is now you got to get your own dishs and go up to the counter and wait on yourself but of course we will have waiters when things gets more settled. You also got to make your own bed and that won't never kill nobody Al because all as we got is 2 blankets and you don't have to leave the bed open all A.M. like at home because whatever air wanted to get in wouldn't let these blankets stop it.

Then they give us an hour of drilling and that was duck soup for me on acct. of the drilling we done on the ball club last spring and you ought to seen the corporal and sargent open their eyes when they seen me salute and etc. but some of the birds don't know their right from their left and the officers had to put a stick of wood in their right hand so they would know it was their right hand and imagine if some of them was ball players and played left field. They would have to hire a crossing policeman to tell them where to go to get to their position and if they was pitchers they wouldn't know if they was right hand pitchers or left hand pitchers till they begun to pitch and then they would know because if they were hog wild they would be left handers.

The corporals and sargents come from the regular army but after a while Capt. Nash will pick some of us out to take their place and it is

a cinch I will be picked out on acct. of knowing all about the drills etc.

The next thing was a lecture on what they could do to us if we got stewed or something and how to treat the officers and we got to sir them and salute them and etc. and it seems kind of funny for a man that every time he walked out to pitch the crowd used to stand up and yell and I never had to sir Rowland or Collins. I'd knock their block off if they tried to make me.

Well every time we wasn't doing something else they sprung some more of them upseting exercises on us and I called the corporal to one side and says if he would excuse me I would pass up some of them because I didn't need to exercise on acct. of playing baseball all summer and besides I was tired and he says these exercises was to fix me so I wouldn't get tired and he made me go through with all of them. How is that for brains Al and I suppose if a man was up all night watching a corpse or something this bird would make you stay awake all the next day so you wouldn't get sleepy.

For dinner we had roast chicken and sweet potatoes and cream corn and biscuits and coffee and for supper they was bake beans with tomato sauce and bread and pudding and cake and coffee and the grub is pretty fair only a man can't enjoy it because you got to eat to fast because

if theys anything left on your plate when the rest of them birds gets through you got to fight to keep it from going to the wrong address. Well Al its pretty near time for the tattoo buggle which means the men has got to shut up and keep quiet so I am going to get ready for bed but I don't know if I would rather have them keep quiet or not because when they are keeping quiet you don't know what they are up to and maybe they are snooping a round somewheres waiting for a man to go to sleep so they can cut your throat. Some of them has been use to doing it all their life Al and they are beggining to miss it. But I don't know if I wouldn't just as leave die that way as from them upseting exercises.

Your pal,

JACK.

CAMP GRANT, Sept. 26.

FRIEND AL: Well Al don't be surprised if you pick up the paper some A.M. and see where I'm gone and you may think I am just jokeing Al but I am telling you the truth and I am glad Florrie is fixed so she can make a liveing for herself and little Al because I wouldn't bet a nickle I will be alive by the time this gets to you.

I guess I all ready told you the kind of birds we got in our Co. Well the worst one in the bunch is a guy named Sebastian and of course he would have to be the one that got the bunk next to mine. Well Al you remember me writeing to you about the little runt that throwed that guy's trombone away, well his name is Lahey but we call him Shorty on acct. of him being so short. Well I hadn't payed much attention to this here Sebastian because he has always got a grouch and don't say nothing only to mumble at the officers when they ask him some question but Shorty knows him and last night he told me all about him and he has been pinched 50 times for stabbing people but he has got some pull or something and they can't never do nothing to him except once he served a turn at Joliet for cutting off a guy's ears because he wouldn't get up and

give him a seat on a st. car. He has always got a knife hid on him somewheres and his first name is Nick so they call him Nick the Blade on acct. of always haveing a knife on him.

I don't know if I told you or not but we got a shed outside of the barracks with shower baths and etc. and everybody is supposed to take baths and keep themself clean and of course its a pleasure for a man like I because I got use to takeing them every day after the game and I don't feel right unless I am clean but some of the birds hollered like a Indian the first time the officers made them get under the shower and you would think they never seen water before and I guess some of them hadn't because when they come out afterwards the officers had to ask them their name.

Well Al I was takeing a bath yesterday and this big Nick bird was standing there striped and he couldn't get up the nerve to step under the shower and Corporal Daly come up behind him and give him a shove under the water and he give a bellow that you could hear from here to Rockford and I didn't know who he was then and I couldn't help from laughing and he seen me but he didn't say nothing and I wouldn't of thought no more about it only for what Shorty told me afterwards. Well Shorty was there to and he laughed at him to but Nick didn't see him but he

I'm glad Florrie is fixed so's she can make a living,
for herself and little Al (p. 27).

seen me and Shorty says I better keep my eyes pealed because Nick wouldn't think no more of stabbing a man then picking his teeth and if theys one thing he won't stand for its somebody laughing at him.

Well I been keeping my eyes pealed all right and I kept them pealed all night last night but I can't stay awake all night every night and the first time I doze off it will probably be the last time.

Sebastian hasn't spoke to nobody or looked at nobody today and when a man acts like that it means they are makeing plans. Well Al I only wish he was planning to dessert from the army and if I seen him trying to make his get away I wouldn't blow no buggle to wake up the guards. I'll say I wouldn't Al.

I pretty near forgot to tell you that Teddy Roosevelt was here today over looking us and he made a speech but they was about 20 thousand for him to talk to and I was a mile away and couldn't hear nothing but I suppose he told the boys they was fine physical specimens and etc. Well Al that stuff is O.K. but if I wasn't a fine physical specimen I might be somewheres where I could go to sleep without some stabber waiting to carve their initials in my Adams apple.

Your pal,

JACK.

T.R.

Camp Grant, Sept. 29.

FRIEND AL: Well old pal you see I am still alive and I guess that is because by the time night comes a round Nick the Blade is all wore out with them upseting exercises and etc. and hasn't got enough strenth left to carve nobody or maybe he has figured out the truth which is that I wasn't realy laughing at him Al but when I am takeing a bath I feel so good that I am libel to bust out laughing at nothing you might say.

But Sebastian isn't the only bird I got to watch now Al because last night they sprung a new one on me and he just come into the camp yesterday and the man that was sleeping on the other side of me is sick in the infirmiary so they stuck this new one in his bunk and now I got them on both sides and I don't know which is the worst Nick or him because this one wispers all night and it would be O.K. if he was wispering in his sleep or wispering to himself but he isn't.

I didn't turn in till 11 and Nick was buzzing away like a saw buck and I figured on getting some sleep myself but I hadn't no sooner layed down when the wispering begun on the other side.

First I didn't catch what he was trying to get at but I heard him the second time all right and he says "Do you want me to kill?" Well Al for 2 or 3 minutes I couldn't get enough strenth up to turn over and look at him but the next time he repeated it over again I couldn't stand it no more so I said "Are you talking to me?" And what do you think he said Al? He says "I am talking to God."

Well Al the connection couldn't of been very good you might say because he kept asking the same question over and over and not getting no answer but how was I to know when the party at the other end would speak up and maybe say yes and they wasn't nobody closer to him then me for him to work on so you can see what a fine nights rest I got Al and this A.M. I told Shorty Lahey about him and sure enough Al the bird is a gun man named Tom the Trigger and Shorty says he is a nut that thinks he is aces up with the all mighty and some times he imagines that they are telling him to go ahead and shoot and then he takes aim at whoever is handy.

Well Al this was inspections day and everybody was supposed to have a clean shave and their hair brushed and all their buttons sowed on and their beds made up neat and their shoes and mess kits shinned bright and etc. and Capt. Nash and the lieuts. give us all the double O and some of the

boys got a nice little baling out for the way they looked but I looked like a soldier ought to look Al and didn't give them no chance to ball me out.

But what difference is it going to make Al for me to look good and have things neat when I am sleeping between a man that if he can ever stay awake till I doze off he will dig a trench system in my chest with a stilleto and on the other side of me they's a bird that the minute the lord says Fire he will make me look like a soup strainer. It don't hardly seem like its worth while to be strick about looks when sooner or later they are bound to muss me and my bed both up.

Your pal,

Jack.

Camp Grant, Oct. 3.

FRIEND AL: Well old pal I just got some good news and this it is Al. Next Saturday they are going to let some of the boys go home on leave and I asked Corporal Daly to fix it up for me to go and he says he didn't know if he could or not because most of the ones that's going is men that has been here a mo. or more but on acct. of me haveing been with the White Sox they fixed it so as I could go and the world serious opens up in Chi Saturday and I won't get away from here till Saturday noon so I can't get there for the first game but I will see the Sunday game and won't Gleason and them pop their eyes out when I go down to the bench with my cocky suit on and shake hands with them and I bet Rowland will wish I was wearing the White Sox uniform instead of Uncle Sam's uniform.

Well Al I can't hardly wait to get home and see Florrie and little Al and of course I will see them Saturday night and I will take them to the game Sunday and leave for back here after the game because a man has got to be back in camp at 11 Sunday night and the funny part is that Florrie was going to bring little Al and come and

see me next Sunday but now I am going to see her and I have wrote her to not come.

Well I am feeling to good to go to bed but that is where I ought to be Al because I wasn't never so tired in my life because they hung a new one on us this P.M. Instead of giveing us upseting exercises from a quarter to 4 till a quarter after they made us all run 20 minutes without stopping and they says it was to improve our wind. Well before we was half through I didn't have no wind to improve and I suppose some day they will pull all our teeth so as we can chew better. At that I would of been O.K. only my feet got to hurting and now I can't hardly walk and all because the shoes they give you are about 6 sizes to small and they keep lectureing us about feet hygeine but how is a man going to keep your feet O.K. when they make you wear shoes that Houdini couldn't get in or out of them.

But listen Al the news about going to Chi isn't the only peace of good news I got today because I also found out that this bird that Shorty called Tom the Trigger isn't no gun man at all and this here Nick the Blade won't do nothing to me because he is scared of the officers so I won't have to lay awake no more nights worring but I didn't find it out till today and here is how it come off.

This A.M. I went to sleep right at breakfast and couldn't keep my eyes open so Corporal Daly

come up to me afterwards and asked me what was the matter so I told him I was to nervous to sleep nights on acct. of a crazy man bunking next to me and any minute he might take a notion and shoot me full of holes. I didn't say nothing about Nick the Blade on the other side of me because he was standing where he could hear us. So Corporal Daly asked me who I was talking about and I told him and he laughed and says that if I waited for Castle which is this other bird's name to start shooting I would probably die of old age or something because he is one of these objecters that don't beleive in war and he told them about it the first day we got here and says he objected to being a soldier. So Capt. Nash asked him if he would object to unloading a few cars of coal and that is what he has been doing up and till last Friday and then he begun objecting to a shovel and he says he would like to join the rest of us and see what it was like and maybe he would loose his objections. So now they are giveing him a week to make up his mind what he is going to do and he is talking it over all the while with the Lord and if the Lord tells him its O.K. to kill people why well and good but he won't practice on us because in the first place he hasn't no gun and if he had one he wouldn't know if it was to shoot with or stir your coffee.

So afterwards I told Shorty Lahey he had

made a mistake about Castle and he says "All right and if he is a objecter it is up to us to talk him out of it." So after supper tonight Castle was seting right near me in the recreation room and Shorty come up to him and says "Well Castle haven't you been able to get that party on the wire yet" so Castle asked him what he meant and he says he heard Castle was waiting for a message from somewheres telling him if he should be a soldier or not so Castle didn't answer and begun to read. So Shorty says "You ain't the only one that objects to war but we got to make the world safe for Democrats and you shouldn't ought to object to getting your head blowed off in a good cause." So Castle spoke up and said he didn't object to getting killed but what he objected to was killing other people. So Shorty says "Well then all you got to do is stick along side of me in the trenches and when you get orders to go over the top you can slip me your gun and bayonet and I will see that they don't nobody sneak off with them dureing your absents." So then Castle got up and walked out on us.

So I says to Shorty I said, "You certainly had the wrong dope on that bird and maybe you got Sebastian wrong to." So he says "No I haven't and I may as well tell you what he told me today. He told me he would of cut you up in slices long ago only if he done it here in the

He objected to being a soldier, so Capt. Nash asked him if he would object to unloading a few cars of coal (p. 39).

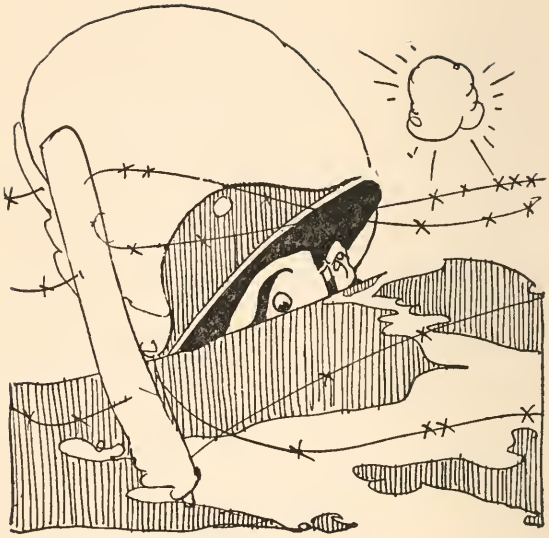
camp he wouldn't have no chance to make his get away and he is waiting till some time he catchs you outside of the camp and then he will go to work on you. And if I was you and a married man I would rather get it here then in France because if you get it here your Mrs. can tend the funeral provide it they find enough of the slices to make it worth while."

Well Al he has got a sweet chance to catch me outside of the camp because when he is outside of the camp I will be inside of the camp and I am glad I found out the truth about both he and Castle and now maybe I can get some sleep.

So all and all I feel a whole lot better then I did only for my feet but feet or no feet I will enjoy myself in Chi and I only wish I was going tomorrow instead of wait till Sat.

Your pal,

JACK.



CAMP GRANT, Oct. 7.

FRIEND AL: Well Al its Sunday night and I haven't been to Chi or nowheres else and I don't care if I ever go anywheres and the sooner they send me to France to the front line trenches I will be tickled to death.

Well old pal I decided yesterday A.M. to stay here and not go and I made up my mind all of a sudden and it was partly because I wasn't feeling good and my feet pretty near killed me and besides they are going to pick some of us out for corporals and sargents pretty soon and I figured a man would have a better chance of getting a officer job if you didn't ask them for leave all the while. So as soon as I changed my mind about going I found one of the boys that was going and asked him to call Florrie up as soon as he got to Chi and tell her I couldn't get off and for her to come out here today and see me and bring little Al.

Well Al yesterday and today has been the 2 longest days I ever spent and it seems like a yr. since yesterday A.M. and it don't hardly seem possible that I was feeling so good yesterday A.M. and now I don't care if school keeps or not as they say. Yesterday A.M. I was up before the

buggle blowed all ready and so excited I couldn't hardly eat breakfast and just before inspections Shorty Lahey seen me smileing to myself and asked me what was the joke and I told him they wasn't no joke only I was going home and he says he hoped I would have a good trip and come back safe in sound so I said I guessed they wasn't no danger of anything happening to me and he says "You will be O.K. if you keep your eyes open." So I said "What do you mean keep my eyes open."

So he says "Your a game bird but they's no use of you takeing reckless chances so you want to be on the look out every minute till you get back."

So then I asked him what and the hell he was talking about and he says "Didn't you know that Nick the Blade was going along with you?"

Well Al it seems like Sebastian got wise that I was going home on leave and he seen a chance to get even with me for laughing at him or that is he thought I was laughing at him but I really wasn't but any way as soon as he found out I was going he told them his brother in law had fell and struck his head on the brass rail and was dying and wanted him to come home and they eat it up and give him leave. So when Shorty tipped me off I said I would wait and go on a later train but Shorty says that wouldn't do me

no good because Nick wouldn't be a sucker enough to try and pull anything on the train amidst all them soldiers but would wait till we was in Chi and then he would get his gang and lay for me and the way he generally worked was come right up to your flat and get you and if your wife or kid says I yes or no it would be taps for them to. And Nick could come back here to camp and they wouldn't never know he was mixed up in it.

Well Al I guess you know I am not scared of anything in the world as far as myself personly am concerned but Florrie isn't one of the kind that would set there in a rocker and pair her finger nails while their husband was getting massacreed and little Al is a game bird to and a chip of the old block and they would both holler like a Indian and call for the police and you know what would happen to the both of them and I wouldn't care for myself but if anything happened to them I would feel like I was the murder.

So while I just laughed at Sebastian and his gang on my own acct. I would be a fine stiff to in danger my wife and baby and besides as I said I eat something for breakfast that didn't set good on me and I don't know if it was the coffee or the milk or what it was but I eat something that was poisoned and that's a fine way to treat soldiers is to give them poison food and the easi-

est way to get the Germans killed off would be to invite them out here and board a while. And in the second place if a man asks for leave when he hasn't only been here 2 wks. it would hurt my chance to get a corporal or a sargent and any way I figured Florrie would rather see something new like the camp then set through a ball game and of course it would be different if I was pitching but I suppose it was Faber's turn today and I see where Cicotte trimmed them yesterday but at that the score would of been 1 and 1 if Felsch hadn't of hit that ball out of the park and Sallee must be his brother in law or something to give him a ball like that to hit. If I was pitching he would be lucky to hit one up in the press box.

So I told Sargent Leslie I wasn't feeling good and would he fix it for me to take my leave some other time and he says I was the only soldier he ever seen that was to sick to go on their leave so then I told him my wife and kid was comeing out here to see me today and he says all right.

So I didn't go Al and the funny part of it is that somebody must of tipped Sebastian off that I wasn't going and what does he do but get his leave called off to and he has been here all yesterday and today and that proves he is laying for me and just wanted to go because I was going and it looks like the only way I can ever get away from here is sneak out without letting nobody

Camp Grant must be infected with mormons (p. 51).

know I am going and even then he would probably send word to his gang in Chi to keep their eye on me till he come.

I have caught him looking at me 2 or 3 times and I had a notion to ask him if he seen anything green but what is the use Al of starting something with a man like he and if I was to loose my temper and bust him Capt. Nash might hear about it and shut us both up in the guard house together and one or the other of us wouldn't never come out alive and which ever one it was it would give the camp a black eye.

Well Al about all I done today was look for Florrie and little Al and I didn't give them up till 5 o'clock tonight because I thought maybe they had missed the A.M. trains and would come later and every time I seen a woman and kid toddleing up the road I would think sure it was them this time and I was dissapointed about 30 thousand times because they was at least that many women and kids here today and if they was all somebody's wife Camp Grant must be infected with Mormons.

All the women had baskets and boxs full of pie and jell and fried cakes and what all but they wasn't no package of goodys with my name and address on them Al and they wasn't no little schaefer yelling theres daddy when they seen me and running up to get huged.

Well Al the man that was to call up Florrie come back this P.M. and come in the barracks just before I started this letter and I asked him I said "Well Bishop did you call up my wife like I told you?" His name is Bishop. "Hell" he says "I forgot all about it." And honest Al his size is all that saved him the little srimph and if he was anywheres near a man I would of Bishoped him right in the eye. But I managed to keep my hands off of him and all as I said was for him to get out of my way before it was to late and then he begun to whine and says how sorry he was and he says "I got some excuse because I reached home just in time to be presented with a baby girl."

How is that for an excuse Al and the only wonder is that he didn't forget if it was a boy or a girl before he got back here but of course a man like he wouldn't have nothing but a girl. But isn't it just my luck Al for me to trust somebody to do something and then for them to go and have a baby on me? And I hope every time he gos home she is yelling all night with the collect.

Your pal,

JACK.

CAMP GRANT, Oct. 10.

FRIEND AL: Well Al I wrote to Florrie Sun. night and told her what had came off and about this fat head forgetting to call her up and I just got a letter back from her and she says her and little Al both of them cried themself to sleep Saturday night because I didn't show up and she had let little Al set up till 9 o'clock so as he could see his daddy in a uniform and when I didn't come then or Sun. A.M. neither they thought I didn't care for them no more so they went to the ball game Sun. P.M., and McGraw started another left hander and you probably read what happened to him and I suppose everybody is saying what a whale Faber is and who wouldn't be a whale if they get 5 runs for you in one inning but even if you are a whale that don't excuse you from trying to steal a base that one of your own men all ready got there ahead of you and hasn't left yet.

But Florrie and little Al are comeing out here next Sunday Al and this time they won't be no mix up because I won't depend on no half wit that the minute they become a father they go all to peaces.

But what I wanted to tell you about was Sebastian. Well Al Shorty Lahey was trying to make me believe this bird was a bad egg and that they called him Nick the Blade because he always went a round with a knife and whittled you if you looked X eyed at him but the next time Shorty wants to kid somebody he better try it on some yapp that hasn't been in the big league and I let him think he was stringing me just to see how far he would go with it but if he thought he had me fooled the shoes was on his feet not mine.

Well Al Sebastian's name is just plain Nick without no Blade on it and the only blade he ever pulled was a blade of grass or something because he use to help take care of the grounds at Washington Pk. before he was drafted and he has been one of my admirers for a long while and that is why he kept looking at me and he says he use to always try and get to the games when it was my turn to pitch and he has been wanting to talk to me ever since we been here but today was the first time he got up the nerve and he never had no intentions of going on leave last Sat. and to prove it he showed me a letter he got from his wife last Friday and she don't spell very good but she spoke in the letter about comeing here to see him this next Sunday and nothing about him comeing there to see her and she is going to bring their 2 kids along and he says he

never seen a man with a prettier wind up then I got and all together he is O.K. and when Shorty trys to make you beleive somebody is a murder he ought to pick out a man that looks like the part.

I haven't said nothing to Shorty and I won't but what I will do is play a joke on him right back only I will make it a good one and not no fizzle like some of his.

And oh yes Al they have sent Castle over to the quarter masters dept. and he won't have a chance to kill nobody there except when they come after a pair of shoes.

Your pal,

JACK.

CAMP GRANT, Oct. 12.

FRIEND AL: Well old pal I am writeing this in the Y. M. C. A. where a man has got some chance to hear yourself think as they say but if you try and write over in the barracks if they don't joggle your arm or tip your seat over for a joke they are all the time jabbering back and forth in foreign languages till you get so balled up that instead of writeing a letter a man is libel to make out his will in Eskimo or something.

Speaking about foreign languages Al the next time I see you I will be talking French like a regular Frenchman and you will have to ask me to translate what I am talking about. Of course I am just jokeing about that because I wouldn't spring a lot of stuff on you that you wouldn't understand and I might just as well go up to a statue and ask them how their father stood his operation or something. But what I am getting at is that I am going to join the French lesson class here and its something that you don't have to belong to it unless you want to but I figure a man is a sucker if they don't take advantage of a chance like this because in the first place it don't

cost you nothing and in the second place the men that knows how to talk French will have all the best of it when we get over there because suppose you was in Paris and felt like you wanted a glass of pilsner and if you said it in French they would fetch it to you but if you just said pilsner they wouldn't know if you was asking for something to drink or a nasal dooch or what not.

But besides that Al after we get to France the French officers will want to tip us off on this and that about the Germans and of course they won't talk to the privates but they will only talk to the officers and if I am a officer by that time which it looks like a cinch I will be one by that time at the outside why suppose I was standing by 1 of our genls. and a French genl. wanted to tell him what was what and etc. but couldn't talk nothing but French and our genl. couldn't make head or tales of it then I could act like an interpeter between the both of them and the first thing you know all the high monkey monks when they want to talk back and forth will be pageing Capt. Keefe or Major Keefe or whatever officer I am by that time.

Some of the boys laughed at me tonight when I told them about going to attend the lessons but I will be the one that does the laughing when we get across that old pond and Shorty Lahey the smart alex that I told you about says to me "We

won't do all our training with the French army but we will do some of it with the English army so while you are at it you better learn to talk English to." So I said "You better learn to talk English yourself" and he shut his mouth.

Well Al Florrie and little Al will be here to see me Sunday and I can't hardly wait for them to get here and I suppose Florrie will bring along some daintys of some kind that she cooked up herself or maybe got the swede girl to do it but of course I am not worring about whether she brings anything or don't bring anything as long as she brings herself and the kid only most of the wifes that comes out here Sundays brings something along to show they been thinking of you though if I was most of these birds wifes the only time I would think about them would be when I said my prayers at night and then I would thank God they had joined the army.

Your pal,

JACK.

Camp Grant, Oct. 14.

FRIEND AL: Well Al its Sunday night and I been entertaining company. Florrie and little Al got out here just after noon and I was in the barracks reading about the world serious game in Chi yesterday and Florrie says she asked 1 of the boys where I was at and he told her I was polishing the general's shoes and wouldn't he do just as well. How is that for a fresh bum Al and of course I don't have to polish the general's shoes or any shoes and if I could find out who it was that Florrie was talking to I would polish their jaw for them.

Well of course Florrie didn't beleive him and the next man she asked was Nick Sebastian and he come and got me and you ought to seen Florrie stair when she got a look at me in my uniform and little Al didn't know me at first and when Florrie says to him who is it he says it was the capt. Well Al it is to soon to be calling me a capt. but if they are running this game on the square it won't be long and they will be calling me more then that.

Well Florrie handed me a box and she says I was to not open it till she was gone and then I

showed them over the camp and the way the boys staired at Florrie I couldn't help from being proud of her but of course if some of them had of got to fresh I would of fixed them so they wouldn't do no stairing for a couple of wks. Sebastian's wife and 2 kids was here to visit him and we run into them and we all went a round together and I made the remark that it would be nice for Mrs. Sebastian and her kids and Florrie and little Al to all go back to Chi on the same train together and it was O.K. with Mrs. Sebastian but when I and Florrie was alone together for a few minutes she started to ball me out for makeing the suggestion and I asked her what was the matter with it and she says she wasn't going to set in the same seat on the train with a woman that looked like she had left home before she got up and little Al would probably catch something from the 2 Sebastian kids so I said that Mrs. Sebastian done real work for a liveing and you couldn't expect her to look like Sarah Bernhart but Florrie is the kind that if she takes a dislike towards somebody its good night to them and it don't do no good to tell her that a person can't help their looks and that is all the more reason you should try and not hurt their feelings. So Mrs. Sebastian had a round trip ticket on the C.B. and Q. and so did Florrie but she pretended like hers was on the I.C. and

I didn't feel so sorry for him when we opened the boxes they had broughten us (p. 65).

thats the way her and little Al went back so they wouldn't have to set with the Sebastians and take a chance of little Al catching something though from what I seen of the Sebastian kids they looked as strong as a horse and they wasn't no danger of catching nothing from them unless maybe it was the banana habit.

I suppose I would of been a grass widower long ago if I was ugly and how will it be if I get shot up in the war and Florrie would sew me for a bill of divorce on the grounds that I didn't have no nose to smell the cooking.

Well Al after they had gone Sebastian made the remark that I had a beautiful wife and I couldn't help from feeling kind of sorry for him so I says "Never mind old boy" I said to him "as long as your Mrs. is a good mother and willing to work you should not worry if she is no Eva Tanguay." But I didn't feel so sorry for him when we opened up the boxs they had broughten us and Sebastian's wife had give him doughnuts and a pie and part of a cake and goodys of all kinds and when I opened up my box it was a lb. of candy like you get in a union station for 60 cts and if it wasn't for the picture of a girl on the cover it would be all profit and a man can't eat the picture which was the only part of it that hadn't ran together like chop sooy and Florrie would of made just as big a hit with me if she

had of put in the time bakeing me a mess of cookys that she spent toneing up her ear lobs or something.

Well Al I suppose you read about yesterday's game in Chi. I been saying right along that the White Sox was to lucky to loose and the only way I can figure out yesterday's game is that they must be a rule in the National League where you can't change from 1 pitcher to another pitcher till the other team gives their consent. From what I read in the papers Sallee could of been turned loose with his fast ball in a looking glass factory without damageing the goods and when Jackson and Collins begins to take a toe hold against a left hander its time to summons the Red X. You will notice Rowland didn't waist no time getting Russell out of there and the next time he starts a left hander will be on the training trip next spring in Wichita where if you beat them to bad they won't give you a card to the Elks.

Your pal,

Jack.

Camp Grant, Oct. 16.

MY CHER AMI: I suppose you will think I have gone crazy when you read the way I started this letter out and you will wonder if I have gone crazy. Well Al that is the French word for my dear friend in English so you see I have not gone crazy after all. I took my first lesson last night and it is going to be nuts to learn it because most of the words is just like English only spelled different and you don't say them the same but the man learns us a dozen words and tells us how to say them and we keep saying them over till we get them down and it wont' be long when we got enough of them learned so as we can jabber back and forth in front of the boys that didn't have sense enough to learn it and they won't know if we are calling them names or getting ready to murder them.

Well Al we had Gen. Barry out overlooking us yesterday and he said we was a fine looking bunch of soldiers as he even seen and we put in most of the day digging trenchs just like the ones they got over in Germany and when we get them fixed up we will practice fighting for them till we can go through them Dutchmen like they

was fly paper and I wouldn't be surprised Al if we got word soon to pack up and start because Red Sampson one of the boys in our Co. has got a brother thats over there all ready and he is Gen. Pershing's right hand bower and so he gets the dope pretty straight and in a letter Red got from him he says Gen. Pershing had asked Secty. Daniels to send over the best looking lot of soldiers from each camp and from what Gen. Barry said about us I suppose we will be the first to go but it may not be for a wk. or so because Red said he heard we wasn't going till each Co. had a rifle.

If we do have to go in a hurry I won't be able to write you about where we are leaveing from and etc. on acct. of the censure because the German spy might get next to it and he could wire across to Germany and the submarine U boats would be on the outlook for us. But between you and I Red says we are libel not to go where the submarines can get a crack at us but we may slip around the other way and light in Japan and make the rest of the trip by R.R. and he says we may even not go to France but stay and help the Russians out. So Shorty Lahey was there and he has always got to say something so people will think he knows it all so he said the Russians didn't need nobody to help them out because they were pretty near out now. So Red said "You will notice they didn't loose much

ground yesterday" and Shorty says "No they only loose 2 miles and they must of been a strong east wind blowing but I will bet you that if we do make the trip that way we will bump into them along about Ogden Utah." So Red says "No because if they ever get to Utah they will hide in Salt Lake City where the Germans couldn't tell them by their beards." So then Shorty seen he was getting kidded and shut up.

This A.M. we spent a half hour listening to a speech about the German gas and of course you have read about the gas Al and it isn't like regular gas but its some kind of poison that the Germans lets it loose in the air and it floats across Nobodys land and comes to the other trenchs and if you haven't got no mask its good night but we are all going to have masks to wear so the gas can't hurt us. Red says thats one thing where the Russians have got it on us and they don't have to be scared of dying from gastritis because the Germans haven't no gas fast enough to catch up with them.

Well Al the world serious is over just like I said it would be with the White Sox winner and each one of the boys gets $3600.00 and that would of been my share only I loved my country more than a few dollars and I bet the boys feel kind of ashamed of themself to think I was the only one that passed up all that jack to work

for Uncle Sam at $30.00 per mo. but between you and I Al I have got a scheme where I will make twice that amt. and if some of the rest of the boys here thought about it they could do the same thing but why should I tip them off because you can bet they wouldn't tip me off to a good thing if they thought of it first.

Here is the scheme when a man has got a family the govt. keeps out ½ of your pay every month or more if you want them to and then the govt. sticks the same amt. in with it and sends it to your wife or who ever gets it. Say you are a private and getting about $30.00 per mo. and you tell the govt. to keep out $15.00 of it. So the govt. keeps $15.00 and sticks another $15.00 with it and sends it to your family.

Well Al I am going to tell them to keep out my whole $30.00 per mo. and they will have to put another $30.00 with it and send the $60.00 to Florrie and she won't need it so she can either send it to me or salt it away somewheres in my name and it means I will be getting $60.00 while the rest of them are dragging down $30.00 and if it was just luck on my part I wouldn't think it was hardly fair but when a man figures something out in your head you got a right to take advantage of it and a man that give up a big league salary and the world serious dough to do their bit deserves something extra while the only

way some of the rest of these birds could earn $30.00 per mo. outside of the army would be to ask for it with a peace of lead pipe.

Well old pal bon sore for this time and that means good night in French and pretty soon I will be writeing you a whole letter in French only of course I wouldn't do that because it would be like waisting that much paper because they couldn't nobody in Bedford make heads or tales out of it and I might just as well save my labor for my pains as they say.

Your pal,

JACK.

CAMP GRANT, Oct. 18.

FRIEND AL: Well old pal I got a peace of news for you that I bet you will be tickled to death for my sake when I tell it to you. I guess I told you in my last letter about Gen. Barry inspecting us. Well Al I kind of thought I seen him looking at me like he liked the way I carry myself and etc. but I didn't want to say nothing about it till I was sure but after breakfast this A.M. Capt. Nash sent for me and when I went in his office and saluted he says "Good morning Corporal Keefe." Well Al of course that means I have been appointed a corporal and of course I expected it only I wasn't looking for it so soon and while Capt. Nash didn't say nothing it don't take no Bobby Burns to figure out that the orders come from higher up.

The corporals and sargents we had at first was men from the regular army and they been sending them away lately and now some of the boys from the ranks gets their chance. In order to get a corporal or a sergent a man has got to have the drills down perfect besides being a perfect physical specimen and good appearance and a man that the rest of the boys will look up to

him and respect him and a man that don't know the meaning of the word fear. Well Al I must of filled the bill and I will show Gen. Barry he didn't make no mistake.

My command is made up of 7 men that I am the boss of them and they contain Sebastian and Red Sampson and Shorty Lahey and a wop named Janinny or something and a big stropper named Hess and 2 boys named Gardner and Bowen and some of them is pretty rough birds but I won't have no trouble handleing them because they know about my record in baseball and they can't help from respecting a man that give up a big salary to help Uncle Sam out and the only 1 that might try and give me trouble is Lahey and I guess he has got better sense then trying some of his funny jokes with a corporal because when a private monkeys with a officer he is libel to wake up the next A.M. with no place to wear his hat.

Well Al a corporal isn't the highest officer in the army but its a step up and everybody has got to start at the bottom and Napoleon started as a corporal and the soldiers was all nuts about him and called him the little Corporal and maybe they will give me a nick name like that only of course it won't be the little corporal because that would be like calling Jess Willard Tiny Jess or something and the salary is $36.00 per mo. instead of $30.00 and with that scheme I got fixed

The way he throwed bombs he couldn't of took
a baseball and hit the infield from
second base (p. 77).

up with the govt. that will give me twice $36.00 per mo. or $66.00 and I'll say thats a whole lot better then a private at $1.00 per day.

I have all ready wrote and told Florrie about it and I bet she will go crazy when she reads my letter and after this when they call her Mrs. Keefe she can shrink up her shoulders and say "Mrs. Corp. Keefe please" and you will have to salute when you see me Al. Of course I mean that for a joke because what ever honors I get I wouldn't leave them make no difference in our friendship and betwen you and I it will always be just plain Jack Keefe.

Well Al we started today learning to throw bombs and of course that won't be no trick for me and you might say it was waisting time for me to practice at it because when my arm feels O.K. I can throw in your vest pocket but today it was raining and I wouldn't cut loose and take chances with my arm because I figure this war won't last long and I guess I won't have no trouble signing up in the big league at my own turns after what I done. But you ought to seen the officer that was trying to learn us how and if they all throw like he its a wonder they hit Europe to say nothing about the Germans. He kept his arm stiff like he didn't have no elbow joint and he was straight over hand all the while like Reulbach and you know what kind of control he had.

We didn't have no regular bombs but only stones and tomato cans but the way he throwed he couldn't of took a baseball and hit the infield from second base and finely I told him and he said yes but if you crooked your arm you would wear it out because the regular bombs weighs almost 2 lbs. and you had to use a easy motion. How is that Al for a fresh bum trying to talk to me about easy motions and I had a notion to tell him to go back to France with his motions but I kept my temper and throwed a few the right way till my arm got to feeling sore.

Well its 10 o'clock and after and I am going to turn in and it isn't that I feel sleepy but when a man is a officer you feel like you ought to set an example to the men.

Your pal,

Corp. Jack Keefe.

CAMP GRANT, Oct. 22.

FRIEND AL: Well Al we had some lessons in trench takeing today and I feel like I had been in a football game or something. We would climb up out of the trenchs that was supposed to be the U. S. trenchs and run across Nobody's Land and take the trenchs that was supposed to be the German trenchs and clean them out with rifles and bayonets and bombs and of course we didn't have no real rifles and bombs but if we had of and they had been any Germans in the trenchs it would of been good night to them.

We done it over and over till I was pretty near wore out but of course I pretended like I was fresh as a daisy because a good corporal wouldn't never lay down till he was dead and its their business to set up an example for the boys and inspire them so I kept hollering like Hughey Jennings or somebody and every time we started out of our trenchs I would holler "Come on boys give them hell this time" and I guess it made a hit with the instructers because they kept smileing at me and talking about me between themselfs and I could pretty near guess what they said. But of course it made Shorty Lahey sore to see me getting all the attentions and he says to me "Who

do you think you are Jonah Vark?" So I said "You tend to your business and show some life or I will Jonah Vark you in the jaw."

So afterwards when we was in the barracks he come up and says "If you are playing Jonah Vark you should ought to quit telling us to come on boys and give them hell because Jonah Vark wouldn't never use a word like that." So I said "I guess he would say a whole lot worse then that if he had a dirty rat like you in his command." So that shut him up.

Tonight they showed us some pictures that was supposed to be the West Pt. cadets drilling and Capt. Nash says if we ever got so as we could drill like that he would quit working us so hard. Well Al its all O.K. to hand that stuff to the boys that don't know no more then to fall for it but I hope they didn't suppose I was a sucker enough to think those was real pictures but of course I wouldn't say nothing because if looking at a lot of fake pictures makes the boys work harder the sooner we will get sent to France.

I was just talking to Red Sampson and he was telling me about a bird named Chambers in Co. A and it shows some people don't know when they have got a good thing and don't appreciate what people trys to do for them. I remember this bird comeing out with us on the train and they wouldn't nobody go near him on acct. of him being

such a bum and Red says he heard that for a while after we got here they had to chase this bird under the shower bath with a bayonet and he done most of his drilling in the guard house. So finely his captain told him he wouldn't stand for no more of his monkey business and he would call him up in front of the court marshall if he didn't behave himself.

So then Chambers says all right he would make a new start and sure enough he cut it all out and begin to take a pride in himself and got the drills down pat and kept clean and his captain wanted to show him it payed to be a man and he made a corporal out of him.

Well Al you can't break the rules when you are a corporal no more than a private but this bird went to Chi the day before yesterday on a leave and he was supposed to be back at 11 P.M. last night but he don't show till 2 A.M. and he was all lit up like the City of Benton Harbor and of course the guard nailed him and he got called up before his captain and he busted him and I don't mean he cracked him in the jaw but when a man gets busted in the army it means you get reduced to a private. So I said to Red what a sucker this bird was and Red says maybe he wanted to get busted because a corporal has got such a load on their shoulders that lots of men would rather be a private. So I said it must be

a fine kind of a man that would turn down a job in the army because it was a tough job and Red says "Yes but everybody ain't like you and some men don't want no responsibility but you are one of the kind that the more they have the better they like it and everybody could see you was a born leader the way you acted in that trench drill today."

So I suppose after all a man like Chambers has no business in a job like corporal because it is a cinch nobody would ever call him a born leader unless it was in the gin league but still a person would think he would try and behave himself after the captain give him that chance but still I should not worry and it is none of my business and all I got to do is set up the right kind of an example for my own command and leave the rest of them take care of themselfs.

Your pal,

JACK.

CAMP GRANT, Oct. 23.

FRIEND AL: Well I have quit takeing French class lessons and I quit because I felt it wasn't fair to either myself or Capt. Nash because when a man is a corporal its all head work you might say and a man ought to keep their mind on their job evenings as well as day times and I felt like I couldn't do that and be monking with French at the same time and it would be like as if I was back pitching baseball and trying to learn to play a saxophone or something at the same time and in the evenings when I ought to be figureing out how to pitch to Pipp instead of that I would have my mind on what keys to blow next though of course I just say that for a comparison because I could learn how to play the whole band and still make a sucker out of that bird because all you got to do is to pitch outside. But besides that I figured that the man who was trying to learn us French didn't know what he was talking about and what is the use of learning it wrong and then you got to start all over again when we got over there. For inst. he asked me what was the English word for very in French so I knew it was tres so I said tres and he says no it was tray because you

say the letter e like it was the letter a and you don't pay no attention to the letter s. So I asked him what it was there for then and he said that was just the French of it so I had a notion to tell him to go and take a jump in the lake but I decided to just say nothing and quit. I guess the French people are not crazy and they wouldn't nobody but a crazy man stick a letter in a word and then make up their mind to ignore it you might say and it would be just like as if I wanted a beer and I would go up to the bar and say "Give me a bee" and I guess the man would think I thought I was in a bee hive or something or else he would think I had a bee in my bonnet eh Al?

But laying all jokes to one side I have got to much on my mind to be fooling with it and besides I put in a week on it and I figure I have got it down good enough so as I can get by and besides I am one of those kind that don't have much to say but when theys something to be done you don't have to send no blood hounds to find where I am at.

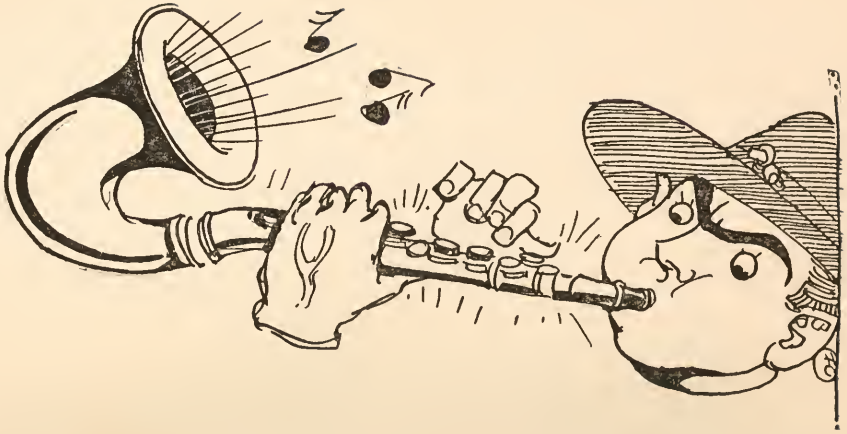
Red Sampson got another letter today from his brother in France and Red says his brother and Pershing was right up close to the front where they could see the fighting and they was a big battle in Sept. that the papers didn't get a hold of it and about 2500 Frenchmen was killed.

So Shorty Lahey asked if they was all privates and Red says No that in the French army they have things different and you don't often see a private killed but when theys 25000 men killed you can figure that at least 20000 of them was corporals and sargents because the corporals and sargents has to go out in front of all the charges.

Well Al I am glad its different in the U. S. army but at that I am not the kind of a man that would hang back for the fear of getting a bullet in me and if I was I would resign from my command and tell them to get somebody else.

Your pal,

JACK.



Camp Grant, Oct. 24.

FRIEND AL: Well Al this was Liberty Day and we had a parade in Rockford and they was also some ball games out here and that is the boys thought they was playing ball and everybody was crazy I should pitch for one of the teams but in the first place I didn't feel like it would be fair and besides I figure its bad dope for the officers to mix up with the men and play games with them and etc. and thats not because I think I am any better then anybody else but if you hold yourself off they respect you that much more and I have noticed that Capt. Nash and the lieuts. don't hang a round with nobody only themselfs and when it comes to the majors and colonels I guess they don't even speak to their own wife only when they are danceing maybe and step on each others ft.

Well Al I decided today to not try and work that little scheme I had about alloting my whole salary to Florrie and then the govt. would put the same amt. with it and I would be salting away $66.00 per mo. instead of $36.00 and I was talking to Corp. Haney about it and he says it couldn't be done and I don't know about that but any way I figured it wouldn't be fair to the

rest of the boys so I am going to allot $18.00 per mo. to Florrie to keep for me and that leaves me $18 per mo. to spend that is it leaves me that amt. on paper but when you come to figure it out Al I am paying $5.60 for soldiers insurance and $10.00 per mo. for another liberty bond I bought and that leaves me $2.40 per mo. to spend and how is that for a man that was drawing a salary in the big league but at that I have got it on some of the privates that gives up the same amt. for insurance and a liberty bond and they only gets $30.00 per mo. and ½ of that amt. gos to their wife so when it comes to the end of the month they owe $.60 for being a soldier.

Speaking about the soldiers insurance with the kind I got if I was disabled they would have to give me $50.00 to $60.00 per mo. on acct. of me haveing Florrie and little Al and that would come in handy Al if I got my right arm shot off and couldn't pitch but at that I know birds in the big league now thats drawing $400.00 to $500.00 per mo. and as far as their pitchings conserned they might just as well have both their arms shot off and include their head.

Well anyway we won't have to practice fighting no more with broom sticks and cans and etc. because Sargent James told us tonight that the rifles was comeing so I said to my boys that I hoped they was good shots so we could make a

Corporal don't carry no arms of any kind and all he is is a kind of decoy to kep the Germans shooting (p. 91).

sucker out of the other squads and I told them if they was all as good a shot as me I wouldn't have no kick because I figure that anybody thats got as good control when they throw or pitch should certainly ought to shoot straight. So Red Sampson says that if I was in the French army it wouldn't do me no good to be a crack shot and I asked him why not and he says the corporals in the French army are not allowed to carry no guns but all they was supposed to do was run ahead of the privates and draw the fire and maybe if the Germans happened to not hit them they could pull out their scissors and cut the bob wire untanglements so as the privates wouldn't have no trouble getting in to the German trenchs where they could use their bayonets.

Red says "Instead of the pollutes trying to get to be a corporal they try not to because when they appoint you a corporal in the French army its a good night kiss and of course its a honor at that because it shows they think you are a game bird and don't care for your own life as long as you help the cause and that is why they picked you out. Because a corporal don't carry no arms of any kind and all he is is a kind of a decoy to kep the Germans shooting at him so as to protect the regular soldiers and that is why over 80% of the casualtys in the French army is corporals."

Well Al as I said before I am not in the French army and I should worry about what they do to corporals in the French army.

I pretty near forgot to tell you that I am going home on leave Saturday and you can bet I am going this time sick or no sick because from all the rumors a round the camp we might be leaveing for across the pond any day now specially with the rifles comeing and that makes it look like we would soon be on our way and if I didn't see Florrie and little Al before I left it would probably be the last time I would see them because something tells me Al that if I go over there I won't never come back.

Your pal,

JACK.

CAMP GRANT, Oct. 26.

FRIEND AL: Well don't be surprised if you read in the paper any A.M. where our regt. has been ordered to France but of course I don't suppose they would come out in the paper with it because General Pershing don't want it to get out what regts. is over there and probably you won't hear nothing about it when we do go because they won't be no chance for me to write to you and if you don't hear from me for a long while you will know we have gone and the next time you hear from me will be from over there.

I got the dope tonight from Red Sampson and he heard it from one of the men that was on guard yesterday and this man heard the Col. telling Capt. Gould of Co. B that General Pershing had sent for the best looking regt. out here and Gen. Barry had recommended our regt. and from what Red says we will probably go in a week or so and he don't know if we are going by the way of the Atlantic or the Pacific but all as I hope is that we get there before the war is over.

I am certainly glad now that I arranged for leave this wk. end because it will give me a chance to fix my affairs up before I go and if anything

should happen to me they wouldn't be no trouble for Florrie about property and etc. I certainly wish I had enough so as I could leave you and Bertha something to help you along old pal and maybe if they had give me more time I could of fixed things up but all as I can leave you now is my friendship and remember that if anything happens I was your old pal and you boys that stays home is the ones we are laying down our life for and if it wasn't for men like we where would you be at Al and your familys?

Well Al I am proud of my squad the way they took the news and we was the only ones that knew about it and yet they wasn't a man in my command that didn't act like he was tickled to death and thats the right kind of a spirit and I spoke about it to Red Sampson. I said "I am proud of all of you because instead of you whineing and putting on a long face you all act like you was going to a picnic or something." So Red says he guessed the rest of the boys and him didn't have no license to cry as long as I kept up my spirits. He says "Maybe it would be different if we was all corporals because then it would seem like we was leaveing home forever. But you are the bird thats takeing the chance and if you can keep smileing we would be a fine bunch if we broke down and begun to whine and I don't suppose theys a man amongst us that has thought

about danger to themselfs but its all whats going to happen to you."

Well Al thats the kind of a bunch to have under you and it makes a man think of Napoleon and how his men looked up at him.

Well maybe you won't get no more letters from me that is if the call comes before I leave tomorrow for Chi but if I get there O. K. I will write to you from there because probably by the time I get back here the orders will be to pack up and move and then I won't have no time to write.

Your pal,

JACK.

CHICAGO, Oct. 28.

FRIEND AL: Well Florrie is still in the hay yet and little Al is playing with himself on the floor and reading the pictures in the Sunday A. M. paper and I thought I would sleep late this A. M. but when a man gets in the habit of wakeing up early you get so as you can't sleep after you wake up once and thats the way it was with me.

Well Al I suppose you will be surprised at me saying it but I pretty near wish I wasn't no officer but just a private like at first and I got a good notion to go back to the camp like Chambers did behind time and ½ stewed and the reason I feel like that is because I have got attached to my boys and I would pretty near rather give up going to France all together then quit them because it seems like it wouldn't be hardly fair to leave them now that they have got so as they look up at me and I figure that even if I wasn't a corporal no more but just 1 of them I could do more good then if I quit them entirely.

I suppose you will wonder what I am getting at Al. Well on the train comeing from Rockford yesterday I was setting with Shorty

Lahey and he was on leave to and I know its a mistake sometimes for a officer to pal a round with their men but I set with him on the train because I can't stand it to hurt a man's feelings and Shorty's hearts in the right place with all his jokeing and etc. So we set down together on the train and got to talking things over and he says "Well Keefe you have got to be a corporal and that means you have made good and I wish I was in your shoes."

So I said that if he took care of himself and minded his business they wasn't no reason why he wouldn't be advanced higher up the ladder some time in the future and he says "Yes but now is the time I would like to be in your shoes because I would like to get over to France and get in it." So I asked him what he meant and he says the dope Red Sampson was giving me was part of it right and part of it wrong and the right dope was that General Pershing hadn't sent for our whole regt. but what he had sent for was all the non commission officers out of the regt. and that means all the corporals and sergents and they was the only ones going this time because the French army had ran out of non commission officers and General Pershing was going to lend them the best ones we had over here in training.

So I said "Well it looks like I was elected and its 100 to 1 that I won't never come back." So

Florrie is still in the hay yet and little Al is playing on the floor (p. 97).

Shorty says "Oh I don't know about that and I think Red Sampson is wrong about them killing all them corporals because from what I heard they's a few of them they don't try and kill so they can take them prisoner and get information off them."

So I said "They would have a hell of a chance getting information off me because they could kill me before I would spill anything." So Shorty says "You might not spill nothing at first but you would be a game bird if you stuck through all the tortures because when they ask you something and you don't tell them they cut off a couple of toes and see if that won't make you talk and so on till you don't hardly know if you are alive but if you are game enough to stand all they give you why finely they will see what a game bird you are and then they finish you off so you won't suffer no more. But if you tell them all you know right at first they won't do nothing to you only of course you will be a prisoner there in Germany till the war is over and they make you work your head off without no food and they don't even feed the guards because they want to keep them mad at the prisoners so as they will make them work harder and every time you act like you was loafing or something the guards scratchs their initials in you with their bayonet."

So I asked him where he got his dope and he says he didn't know if it was all true or not but his wife's 2 brothers was in the German army and they had wrote home about it and maybe it was all bunk.

Well Al I figured I would take Florrie to a show somewheres last night because maybe it would be the last time but after supper I felt kind of sick on acct. of the change in food and I asked Florrie if she would just as leave stay home so I went to bed early and I thought I would get a good rest but I didn't get no sleep and as I said I couldn't sleep this A. M. and now I am waiting for her to get up for breakfast.

I only wish they was some way for me to get out of this corporal and it isn't that I can't handle it but it seems like a shame to leave the other boys that almost worships me you might say and here is little Al playing on the floor and if his daddy was just a private I might maybe stay at Camp Grant all winter and come in and see Florrie and he every month.

Your pal,

JACK.

Camp Grant, Oct. 30.

FRIEND AL: Well Al I am not going to France at all that is right away and this time I got the dope straight from Capt. Nash and not from no Lahey or Sampson.

Here is the way I come to find out Al. I was supposed to get back in camp Sunday night but I missed the train out of Chi and I took the first train yesterday A. M. and I got reported for being A. W. O. L., and that means I was absent without no leave so I got called up in the orderly room in front of Capt. Nash.

So he says "Well Keefe don't tell me your aunt died." So I asked him what he meant because I haven't no aunt only by marriage that lives down in Texas. So he says "Do you know what we could do to you for being A. W. O. L." So I said "I suppose you could bust me." So he says "Yes and that isn't all. If you was drunk or some excuse like that we could have you out in front of a fireing party or if we wanted to go easy with you we could send you down to Ft. Leavenworth for 10 yrs." So I said "I wasn't drunk sir and all the trouble was that I missed a train out of Chi and I didn't miss it more than 2 min-

utes." So he says "Well 2 minutes and 2 wks. don't make no difference in this game. But you have been behaving yourself O.K. and we got a fine record in this Co. and I don't want to loose no non commission officers because I haven't got none now thats worth a dam. So you see that you don't miss no more trains because the next time it will go a whole lot different. You are excused only that you won't get no more leave for a month."

So I said thank you sir and told him I was sorry because I was in a hurry to get to France and didn't want nothing to come up to interfere with me going and he says "You don't want to go no more then I do but it looks like we would all be here till we die of old age." So I asked him if the corporals wasn't going ahead of the rest of the bunch and he says the corporals would go with the privates unless they was all shot by that time for being A. W. O. L.

So here I am Al and I have told the boys I was not going to quit them and I never seen nobody so tickled. Well Al I am glad to in a way and on the other hand its a big dissapointment but a man has got to learn to swallow their dissapointments in the army and take what comes.

Your pal,

Jack.

CAMP GRANT, NOV. 4.

FRIEND AL: Well Al they have begin to bust up our regt. and take men away from it and the men they take will get to France before the rest of us the lucky stiffs but they don't send them right to France from here but they send them down south to the national guards camps and fill up the national guards with them and the national guards are going to get across the pond first because Secty. Daniels wants to save the good regts. for the finish.

Well Al they can't send me to France to soon but it looks like they wasn't a chance for a man like I to get sent with the national guards because the men we are sending down south is the riff and raff you might say who we want to get rid of them so when Secty. Daniels sends word that the national guards at such and such a place wants 7 or 800 men the officers here picks them out from amidst the kitchen policemen and the guard house.

It looks now like the real soldiers that they got here would be here maybe all winter but between you and I Al I got a scheme to beat that game. I found out today that they are going to start a officers training camp here in Jan. and if a man

makes good in it they will give him a lieut. or a capt. and they won't be no riff and raff allowed in the camp only men that would make a good officer so I guess I won't have no trouble getting in the camp and once I win my lieut. or capt. bars they will probably send me straight to France to take command.

Things are going along O. K. without much news to write about. Sarah Bernhart the French comedian was in Rockford Friday and come out to give the boys a treat and for some reason another the most of the boys fell all over their self trying to get up close to her and get her to smile at them. Well Al everybody to their own taste but from what I seen of her she would be perfectly safe around me and if she is a day old she is 50 yrs. old and I will bet money on it. Any way I wouldn't trade Florrie for a dozen like she.

Your pal,

JACK.

CAMP GRANT, Nov. 7.

FRIEND AL: Here is one for you Al and its just between you and I because I wouldn't have no one else hear about it for the world. Yesterday we was all presented with some sox made out of knitting and they come in a bunch from the Red X and when I was going to bed I thought I would try mine on and see if they fit and if they didn't maybe I could trade with somebody that they did. Well Al I stuck my foot down in 1 of them and my toe run into something funny and I pulled my foot out and stuck my hand down in it and pulled out a note that was folded in side of the sock. Well of course I opened the note up and read it and I will copy down what it said. It says "Dear Soldier Boy, you may never see me but if you can spare time to write me just a few lines it will make me happier than any one in the world for I am oh so lonesome. You won't disappoint me will you Soldier Boy?" And it was signed Lone Star but down below she had wrote her name and address. Her name is Miss Lucy Chase and she lives in Texas.

Well Al I can't help from feeling sorry for her

and if it wasn't for Florrie and little Al I would write her a note back and thank her for the sox though between you and I they are to small and try and say something that would cheer her up. But of course Florrie wouldn't like for me to do it and a married man shouldn't ought to be monking around like that and lead a girl on though of course if I did write to her the first thing I would tell her would be that I am married.

But what has been puzzling me is where she seen me. Maybe it was 1 of the times we played in Texas in the spring trip either that or she seen my picture somewheres. Well Al it must of been a picture without my feet in it or she would of made the sox bigger and I wish she had of because I don't feel like tradeing them off to nobody now that I know they was made for me by a admirer. Laying all jokes to 1 side I do feel sorry for the girl and if she had of made herself known to me a few years sooner things might of been different. Don't say nothing about this even to Bertha because I don't want it to get all over Bedford. I am not the kind that brags around about their admirers especially when its a girl.

I thought once or twice today that I would just drop her a card pretending like the sox fit me to a tea and thanking her for them and giving a hint that I was a married man but on second

Everybody cut loose and sung and you could of heard us in Beloit.

thoughts I guess its better to just let the whole affair drop right here.

They sprung a new one on us last night. Word come from the head quarters that everybody had to learn to sing and last night was the first lesson and they was about 3000 of us and the teacher was a bird named Nevin and he got up in front and started out on Keep the home fires burning and said we was to all join in. Well Al for some reason another everybody but he had the lockjaw and as far as we was concerned the fires would of all died out. Most of our gang is from Chi where they leave takeing care of the furnace to the janitor. He tried 2 or 3 other songs but we was all deaf and dumb mutes and he finely give up and says he would try some other time when the cat didn't have a hold of our tongue so on the way back to quarters everybody cut loose and sung and you could of heard us in Beloit. We got a lot of good singers right in our Co. that can hit the minors to but we are not going to bust out on no teacher's say so like we was in kindergarden or something.

Well Al I am going to break into a new game football. They are getting up a club here in camp to play against the Great Lakes navy and the Camp Custer club up in Mich. and they want all the men thats played football to come out and try for the club here. Well I never played

but I told them I did and they won't know the difference when they see me because when a man is a born athelete they can play any game and especially a college Willy boy game like football. I seen one of their college games out to the university in Chi once and a man built like I could of made a sucker out of both clubs.

The capt. of the camp club here is Capt. Whiting and he played with the university of Chi and they got some other would be stars like Shiverick that played with the Ithaca club down east and Schobinger or something from Champlain college here in Ill. and a man from Princeton name Eddy something. Well I will show them something before I get through with them because an athelete has got to be born and you can't make them out of college Willy boys that stays up all night doing the foxy trot and gets stewed on chocolate and whip cream.

Your pal,

JACK.

Camp Grant, Nov. 10.

FRIEND AL: Well Al I suppose you read in the papers about that troop train that a gang of spys tried to wreck it and it was a train full of burglars from here that we sent down to Camp Logan to fill up the national guards and the papers made out like the people that tried to wreck it was pro German spys but if you had of seen the birds that was on the train you wouldn't believe it because they wouldn't no Germans waist their time on them because they will all kill each other anyway before they get to France. One of the birds on it was Shorty Lahey that I all ready told you about him and when the national guards sees him they will just about declare war against Camp Grant.

Well Al you remember me writeing to you about that little girl down in Texas that sent me the note in the sox. Well I got to thinking it over and the more I thought about it I got to thinking that it wasn't the square thing to not pay no attention to her when she maybe wore her hands to the bone and strained her eyes so as my feet would keep warm so finely I set down and answered

her back and I didn't say nothing mushy of course but just a friendly note to let her know I received the sox and I told her they was a perfect fit and I asked her where it was she ever seen me or my picture or how she come to pick me out and I didn't tell her nothing about being married because what would be the use of hurting her and they can't be no harm done because we will never meet and as soon as she writes and tells me where she seen me that will end it. But I just couldn't stand it to think of the poor kid running to the door every time the mail man come and maybe crying when they wasn't nothing for her. I guess Florrie wouldn't have no objections under the circumstances but if she did find out and start to ball me out I would tell her to take a jump in the lake because she never even mended me a pair of sox to say nothing about knit them. I also asked the girl to send me a picture of herself because it tickles them to be asked for their picture and of course as soon as I get it I will tear it up but she won't know that.

Well Al I decided to not play on the football club here after all. In the 1st. place theys 3 or 4 privates trying for the club and I don't believe in mixing up with them to much and if Whiting and them other officers wants to all right, but that don't make it all right in my mind. And

3 or 4 of us bumped into each other and I got a kick in the head (p. 117).

besides I figured it wasn't fair to either myself or Capt. Nash to run the risk of getting hurt in some fool game to say nothing about learning a lot of fool signals that don't mean nothing but just learning them takes up your time that you ought to spend thinking how to improve your command. And another thing the minute they started to practice I seen they didn't know the game and they will get licked every time they play and I can't stand to be with a looser. They talked about what a great kicker this Shiverick is but I watched him trying to kick gools and he missed 3 out of 10 and one of them rolled right along the ground like a baby had kicked it.

Capt. Whiting come up to me when I come out on the field and asked me my name and etc. and what position did I play and I told him center rush or tackle back it didn't make no difference. So he asked me what college I played at and I told him Harvard which was the 1st. thing that come into my head. So he says "All right we need a good tackle back so you can play there now in signal practice" so they lined up and I stood back of the center rush and they called out some numbers and throwed the ball to one of them and 3 or 4 of us bumped into each other and fell down and I got a bad kick in the head but it wasn't bad enough to make me quit but

what is the use of takeing chances. They can have their football Al if they want to waist the govt. time but I got enough to think about thinking about winning this war.

Your pal,

JACK.

CAMP GRANT, Nov. 14.

FRIEND AL: Well this was our day out to the rifle range and I'll say Secty. Daniels better hurry up and send some teachers here that knows their business. But wait till you hear about it.

In the 1st. place it was a rotten day and a bad wind and so dark you couldn't hardly see and they ought not to of made anybody try to shoot. Well they had some targets that they said was 100 yds. from where we was to shoot from but it was more like ¼ of a mile and they said 100 yds. so we would think it was closer. Well the idear was that each guy was to shoot 10 times and if you hit the target it counted 1 pt. and if you hit the bulls eye it counted 5 pts. so if you hit the bulls eye every time you got 50 pts. but nobody in the world could do that the way they made us shoot. What do you think of them makeing a man lay on their stomach to shoot instead of standing up and I suppose if the Germans got 100 yds. from us we would all lay there like we had a stomache and let them come. Somebody said we layed that way so as to give them less mark to shoot at. How is that for fine dope?

Because if you was laying on your stomach facing them and they hit you at all they couldn't hit you nowheres only in the head and kill you where if you was standing up straight they would be more libel to hit you anywheres except in the head and maybe you would get off with a flesh wound or something.

Well 1 of the smart aleck lieuts. started out and hit the bulls eye 8 times and the target the other 2 times and that give him 42 and he swelled up like a poison pup but the way the wind was blowing you could tell it was just a accident because if he had of really shot at the target the wind would of carried his shots to hell and gone away from it but what he done was shoot with his eyes shut and the wind done the rest of it for him. So some of the other boys shot and some of them had a lot of luck and Red Sampson got 38 and finely it come my turn and I was dizzy from something I eat and besides by that time it was so dark you couldn't hardly make out where the target was and I was all cramped up laying there but at that I just missed the bulls eye the 1st. time and finely quit with 8. So afterwards Red Sampson asked me how it come I didn't have a expert rifle shooter's meddle on me trying to kid me. So I said "I never had to shoot for a liveing because I could go out and pitch baseball and make real money where a man like

you every time the family wanted meat for dinner they would send you out to shoot a snake or a tom cat or something." So it was him that got kidded.

Well Al I will be shooting with the best of them as soon as I get the nack and when they get a man here to learn us that knows his business and pick out a day when the wind ain't blowing a mile a minute and pitch dark.

I haven't had no answer from that little girl down in Texas and I hope she has got over her infatuation and decided to forget me.

Your pal,

JACK.

CAMP GRANT, Nov. 17.

FRIEND AL: Well Al what do you think I got a letter from the girlie down in Texas and the poor kid has gone crazy over me and I only wish they was some way to stop her because of course it has got to end right here and I will just have to drop her a line and tell her the truth that I am a married man and the best thing she can do is try and forget. But I am afraid it will be pretty hard for her and I only wish she hadn't never seen or heard about me.

For some reason another she won't tell me where it was she seen me or she won't send me no picture because she says I might show it to the boys and laugh over that little girl down in Texas and of course I wouldn't do nothing like that and she wouldn't think so if she knew me better. Here is what her letter says.

My Soldier Boy, so you are an officer now. Well that is just grand and I feel all the happier and prouder to hear from you. No Soldier Boy I won't tell you where I saw you. You will just have to guess. Don't you remember that day at——? If you don't I won't tell you. And I won't send you my photo because I know what

soldier boys are. You would show it to everybody in camp and you would all have a good laugh over the little f—l woman down in Texas who is fond of you. Well Boy we will probably never see each other unless you should happen to be sent to one of the camps down here. Is there any chance of that Soldier Boy? So you quit a job in the big league to fight for Uncle Sam? That was fine of you and makes me all the prouder to have your friendship. I am glad you like the hose I knitted for you. Do you want some more or can I make you a helmet or a sweater or something? Just say what you need and I will make my needles fly to furnish you with it. And write to me soon. We are so far apart that it takes your letters days and days to reach me. Au revoir for this time Big Boy.

Well Al I can't remember to save my soul where it was I and she could of met. Maybe I could if she had of put the name of the town in her letter but she just left a dash like I copied it. I been trying to think up all the girls I met in different towns while I was with the ball club and I can remember a lot of them but nobody named Chase but of course she might of give me a fake name the time we met.

Well as I say theys only the 1 thing to do and that is drop her a line and say how things stand with me and for her to forget about me. Its

mighty nice of her to offer to knit me them other articles but of course I can't ask her to under the circumstances and all I can do is just to call it off or maybe it would be better to not write to her back but just leave her guess the truth only I am afraid she would think I was a bum to not acknollege her letter. I wish they was somebody to advice me what to do but I guess I can't look for no help from you along those lines eh Al? You never had them looseing their heads and makeing garments for you and etc.

I pretty near forgot to tell you that these college Willy boys got cleaned up 9 to 6 in their game with the sailors from the Great Lakes and the sailors made a monkey out of them and they wasn't a kid on the sailors club that is 20 yrs. old. I bet Capt. Whiting would of gave his right eye for a good husky tackle back when them sailors was pushing his Willys around the field.

Your pal,

JACK.

CAMP GRANT, Nov. 22.

FRIEND AL: Well they have just sent away another train load of the boys to 1 of the national guards and if they keep it up we won't have more then 30 or 40 left to a Co. I wish I was with the boys that went but theys no chance of that because they are keeping the best men here so as we will be all together when they get ready to send us across. And it looks like I won't be able to get into the officers training camp because I heard today that they won't leave nobody in that can't talk all the languages of the ally countrys. Red Sampson heard 2 of the lieuts. talking about it and 1 of them was saying how even the college boys would have to hustle between now and Jan. because while most of them could talk French and Italian they was very few colleges where you can learn Roman and Australian and etc. so it looks like I would be bared out because while I might pick up the French and maybe 1 or 2 others I couldn't possibly master 8 or 9 languages in hardly a month you might say. I don't know what the idear is but it probably come from the same guy that makes you shoot laying on your stomach.

Speaking about a month my month without leave is pretty near up and I am figureing on

going to Chi the 1st. of Dec. and see Florrie and little Al though for all as I know they both may be dead because Florrie won't never suffer from writers cramp on my acct. I have asked her 2 or 3 times to come out for Sunday and bring the kid but no its always to cold or she has got company comeing for dinner or 1 thing another.

Sometimes I pretty near wish I had a wife like Sebastian's thats so homely you can't hardly look at her but still and all you get a chance to once in a while.

Well I wrote to that poor kid down in Texas and told her I didn't want to bother her to make me a helmet or a sweater but I all ready got a helmet. I didn't have the heart to tell her about Florrie or tell her to quit writeing to me but I give her a kind of a hint that I was to busy to spend much time writeing letters and I hope she don't try and keep up a correspondence because it can't do neither of us no good and the best way would be for us to both forget it and of course that wouldn't be no trouble for me but I am afraid a girl don't forget so easy.

Well Al this ain't what you might call a happy letter but I don't know no good news to write only they have gave up our choir practice as a bad job and we don't have to worry no more about letting the fires go out.

Your pal, JACK.

CAMP GRANT, Dec. 2.

FRIEND AL: Well Al I just got back from Chi and of all the tough luck a man ever had I had it.

You remember me telling you about the last time I come back from my leave and I got in late and Capt. Nash says I couldn't have no more leave for a month. Well the month was up Friday and I had it fixed so as I could go to Chi Saturday A. M. with the gang that was going to the football game between our club and Camp Custer and the only ones that was allowed to go was the ones that had boughten tickets to the game so I bought a ticket though I didn't have no intentions of waisting my time out to no Willy boy football game.

Well we got to Chi about noon and we had to march all over town and everybody stood on the sidewalks and cheered us to the ecco and I couldn't get away from the bunch till the parade was over though I don't enjoy marching and have everybody stare at you but when it was over I beat it for home. Well I hadn't said nothing to Florrie about comeing because I wanted to surprise her and I thought of course little Al and the Swede

would be home and I and little Al could walk in on Florrie over to the beauty parlor and surprise her, but when I got to the flat and rung the bell they wasn't no answer and I rung and rung and finely I seen they wasn't nobody home so I went to the beauty parlor and 1 of the girls there told be that Florrie was takeing the P. M. off and wouldn't be back till Monday A. M.

So I went back to the flat and looked for the janitor to let me in and when you don't want janitors they are always snooping around at your coat tails but when you do want them they are hideing in the ash bbl. or something. So it took me about a hour to find this bird and another hour to get him to open the door up for me and of course they wasn't nobody home so the janitor says maybe I could find out where they went from the neighbors so I rung the woman across the hall's bell and she come to the door. So I said "I'm Corp. Keefe and I wanted to know if you knew where is my wife and kid." So she says "They went out." Well Al I suppose I didn't know they had went out and I felt like saying to her "Oh I thought they might maybe of crawled in between the wall paper to take a nap or I thought maybe they might of left the stopper out of the bath tub and got drained off or something." But I just asked her did she know where they went and she said she didn't.

As we marched, everybody stood on the side walks and cheered us to the ecco (p. 129).

Well I seen she didn't know nothing about them or probably nothing else so I went back in the flat and waited and waited and it come along 5 o'clock and I called up a saloon over on Indiana and asked them to fetch me over a doz. bottles of beer and I had 2 of them and then went out to a restaurant and had supper and come back and nobody home yet. Well to make a short story out of it I finished the beer up and finely went to bed and I didn't know nothing more till 9 A. M. this morning when the Swede come snooping into the room and seen me and let out a screem and beat it and I got up and dressed and went in the kitchen and she said Florrie had took little Al somewheres to stay all night with some friends and give the Swede permission to go to a ski jumpers dance out to Berwyn and Florrie would be home about 11.

Well Florrie come strutting in with the kid about 12 looking like she hadn't done nothing out of the way and when she seen me she squeeled and come romping over for a kiss. Well Al she didn't get it. I kissed little Al all right but I didn't see where she had a right to expect favors. Well she seen how things stood and begin trying to explain something about spending the P. M. down town shopping and then going to a show with some friends of hers on the north side and they left little Al in charge of the nurse at the

friends and they both stayed there all night and why didn't I tell her I would be home so as she could have changed her plans and etc. So I said "Yes you are a fine wife and mother running around town with a bunch of bums and leave your kid all alone in charge of a nurse that you don't know nothing about her and for all as you know she might of cut his ears off like a Belgium." Well I was sore and I give her a good balling out and of course it wound up like usual with her busting out crying and then they wasn't nothing for me to do only say I didn't mean what I had been saying and we had dinner and maybe everything would of been O. K. only we hadn't no sooner gotten up from the table when in come ½ of the south side and their wifes to call. Well they wasn't none of them I ever seen before or ever want to see them again and they was all friends of Florrie's and 2 of the ladys was customers of hers so she didn't dare tell them to get the h—ll out of there and a Mrs. Crane and a Mrs. Somebody else picked on me and got me in a pocket on the Davenport and they didn't even have sence enough to call me Corporal but it was Mr. Keefe this and Mr. Keefe that and when did I think the war would end and wasn't the Germans awful and how many men did we have in France and when was I going and so on. And Mrs. Crane said her and all her friends was so

One of the girls there told me Florrie was taking the P.M. off (p. 130).

jealous of Mrs. Keefe because her husband was a soldier so I said I had heard they was room in some of the camps for a few more husbands and Mrs. Crane said her husband had tried his hardest to get into something but he had bad teeth so I said why didn't he try and get into some good dentist office. But they wasn't no way I could get them mad enough to go home till 5 o'clock then I and Florrie and the kid had just a hour together before I had to beat it for the train.

Well Al I won't get no more leave off till Xmas and maybe not then but what is the use any way when your wife gives you a welcome like that and all together it was a fine trip and I won't never try and take nobody by surprise after this but at that why couldn't she of stayed home where a woman belongs.

My train was jamed comeing back tonight and I don't know where they got it but everybody was oiled up and celebrating about beating Camp Custer in the football game and I'll say Camp Custer must be a home for cripples or something if that's the kind of a football club they turn out any way I bet they ain't no room to dance in the guard house tonight.

Your pal,

Jack.

CAMP GRANT, Dec. 4.

FRIEND AL: I guess I was so full of my swell visit home when I wrote you the last time that I forgot about telling you about that little girlie down in Texas. Well Al they isn't much to tell only that I got another letter from her though I as good as told her I wished she wouldn't write me no more but she wrote any way and she says she can't forget me and theys no use asking her to and she wouldn't tell me where it was we seen each other and they was no use me asking her. It looks from her letter like she was getting in deeper every day and I don't know what will be the end of it all and if she done anything to herself on my acct. I would feel like a murder though of course a man can't help how they look or what a girl thinks about them but still and all you can't help from feeling like you was to blame.

I guess the best way to do is just not answer her letter and hope for the best and hope she won't do nothing rash.

Well Al I started out to write you a long letter but I am to wore out and I guess anybody would be after what we went through today. It was

the coldest day I ever seen so they picked it out for us to go on a 19 mile hike and if you could see the roads around here you would know what that means and they can talk all they want to about how the men suffers in France but I would rather go out in the middle of Nobody's Land and start a mumblety peg game then take another of these dam hikes with the weather a million below zero and the road full of rutts as big as the grand canion.

If it hadn't been for setting a example to my command I believe I would of pretended like I was sick and when you are sick they make somebody else carry your junk and leave you ride in a wagon thats O. K. for a private that don't care what the rest of them think of him but a corporal has got to keep going and try to keep his men going and when you got a bunch of sap heads like mine it keeps a man on the jump to tend to them. Red Sampson was so bad that I had to keep after him all the while and finely I pulled a good one on him I said "Sampson everybody in the whole regt. is out of step but you." So the rest of them give him the laugh but he can't take a joke no matter how good it is so he says "I haven't heard that one since they fought with spears." So I said "You get in step and show a little life or I'll spear you."

Well its all over now any way and I don't

Yes you are a fine Wife and Mother running
around town and leave your Kid
all alone (p. 134).

suppose they will send us out again till theys a big blizzard or something and then they will march us to Canada or somewheres for a little work out.

Your pal,

Jack.

CAMP GRANT, Dec. 7.

FRIEND AL: Well Al I got some big news for you. The govt. have changed their plans all around and decided after this to send the best men from the national army to fill up the national guards and that means theys a big bunch of us leaveing soon for Camp Logan down in Texas and the officers say we musent spill nothing about it that is when we are going because if the pro German spys ever found out that our bunch was going down there they would spread the rails and turn switches on us and probably put torpedos on the track or something. So all as I can say is that you won't hear from me here no more and I can't tell you what units we will be in because we haven't got no official notice yet and all as I know is what some of the boys heard that we would be in Col. House's regt. I thought when I 1st. heard the news that it meant we would be starting for France pretty quick and of course I didn't stop to think that they have closed up navigations for the winter.

Well Al I am glad we are going somewheres for the winter where it isn't so dam cold and of course I don't like to be so far away from home but maybe Florrie can get away and come down there and join me for a while and I am going

to have a few hours off any way to say good bye to little Al and she and I wish I could see you and Bertha before I go especially you but theys no chance so good bye and good luck to you and I will write when I can.

I just happened to think Al that Camp Logan is in Texas and thats where that little girl lives but you can bet I won't leave her know where I am because in the 1st. place she would probably be just crazy enough to want to see me or something and besides I wrote her a farewell note yesterday and asked her wouldn't she send me her picture because I thought that would make her feel a little happier to think I wanted her picture even if we don't keep on writeing letters and I don't care if she sends it or not any way if she sent it up here I will probably be gone before that time.

Well Al I will be kind of sorry to leave Camp Grant where all and all we have had a pretty good time and I guess Gen. Martin and them will be sorry to see our bunch duck out and they will have a fine bunch left when we go but I am glad we won't freeze to death this winter and besides that they tell me the national guards is shy of officers and maybe I may not stay a corporal long after I get there but will get something bigger though a corporal can't be sneezed at.

Your pal, JACK.

CAMP LOGAN, Dec. 14.

FRIEND AL: Well old pal here we are in sunny Texas and its been pretty cold so far but nothing like it was up at Camp Grant and of course it don't never get as cold here as up there on acct. of this being further south.

Well nothing happened to us on the way down though of course it would of been good night nurse if it had got out what road we come on and when we left and even at that we seen some bad eggs at several different stations that looked like Germans that might of tried to pull something if they had a chance but we watched them like a hawk and they was scared to make a false move.

Well Al what do you think they have made Shorty Lahey a sargent down here only thank god he isn't in my Co. or I would be up in front of the court's marshall for murder. But him being a sargent shows they must of been pretty hard up and you can bet they was tickled to death to see our bunch roll in. Well Al if he can get a sargent I will be a gen. in a month. He says to me yesterday he says "Well old sport I wish they had of put you in my Co. and you would

do the rest of your drilling with a dish towel." So I said "Yes I would."

Well after thinking it over a while I decided I better write to the little girl and tell her where I was at because I asked her in my farewell note for her to send me her picture of herself and if she sent it up to Camp Grant maybe 1 of them rummys might get a hold of it and open it up and then write back to the girl and kid her about it and I figured maybe if I let her know I was down here that maybe she hadn't sent the picture up there yet. But I didn't give her no encouragement to write to me here and all I said was that if she ever happened to be in Houston and I happened to be in town on leave maybe we might run into each other but I just said that jokeingly because her town is about a 100 miles from here and what would she be doing a 100 miles from home and besides even if I seen her on the st. I doubt if I would know her though I generally almost always remember faces though I can't always remember their names. But if she seen me and spoke to me I would pretend like I didn't hear her and duck because it would only make it tougher for her to talk to me because I would have to tell her the truth. But I guess its all over between us now and any way I hope so.

Your pal,

JACK.

If he can get a sargent I will be a gen. in a month (p. 147).

Camp Logan, Dec. 16.

FRIEND AL: Well old pal I am up against a funny proposition now and it isn't so dam funny at that. Here is a letter I received this A. M. from that girlie. I will copy it down.

"Soldier Boy, so we are going to meet at last. Yes we are, that is if you want it to happen. My aunt in Houston has been wanting me to come there for months, but not till now have I really wanted to. You know why I do now, don't you Soldier Boy? You say it is easier for you to get off Sundays. All right. Will you meet me in the lobby of the Rice Hotel a week from today at one in the afternoon. I will let you take me to dinner and we can talk things over. We have a lot to say to each other, haven't we Soldier Boy? Write me at once and say you will meet me. I can hardly wait to get your reply and if you disappoint me I will do something to make you sorry. But you won't will you? I am just finishing your sweater and will bring it to you."

Well Al when the letter come I had a notion to write to her back and tell her to not come but in her letter she said she would do something to make me sorry and I am afraid of what she would

do and if she done something rash I would feel like it was my fault and besides if she has got a sweater pretty near made for me it would be kind of mean to of made her do all that work for nothing and besides a man needs a sweater a lot of times even down here and I was going to buy one because I didn't have no idear she was makeing one for me. So I figure the best way to do is to tell her I will meet her and I will take her somewheres to dinner and while we are at dinner I can tell her the truth about me being married and it will be much better to tell her to her face then write it in a letter because it would sound pretty hard in black and white but the only thing is we have got to find some quite spot so as if she makes a seen or something they won't be no crowd around to pop their eyes out at us. But I hope she is a game bird and will take it O.K. and I'm sorry now I didn't tell her in the 1st. place and I wish she wasn't comeing and I sometimes wish I was a little scrimp or ugly so as a girl wouldn't look at me twice and between you and I Al it isn't all a bed of roses to be like I am.

I will write and tell you how I come out but I am to exited to write any more now and I wish they was some way I could get out of it all without leaveing no scars.

Your pal,

JACK.

HOUSTON, TEX., Dec. 24.

FRIEND AL: I bet you will pop your eyes out when you read this letter and read what I got to tell you. I will begin at the beginning and tell you what come off so as you will know what come off.

Saturday I pretty near made up my mind that it would be better for me to not see Miss Chase so when I asked for leave for yesterday I hoped they wouldn't give it to me but they give it to me O.K. so I had to come or it would look funny. Well I come into the Rice at about 5 min. to 1 and looked around the lobby and they was only one woman that was alone and she was old about 35 and I looked around and couldn't see no girl that looked like they was waiting for somebody, and while I was looking this woman I seen seen me and come over to where I was standing. Well Al I thought sure it was the girl's aunt and she had heard about our date and was going to raise h—ll or something. Well this woman come up and says wasn't I Corporal Keefe. Well I didn't know what to say and I kind of stalled and she says "Was you expecting to meet some one here?" So I said "Yes I was looking for a man." So

then she kind of smirked and says "Well I was expecting to meet a man to and I thought you was him." So I said "No I guess you have got the wrong bird."

Well Al everything would of been O.K. and I could of got away O.K. only just when I had her beleiving it wasn't me who should come up but Lefty Kramer that pitchs in the Texas League and lives here and instead of him just saying "Hello Jack" of course he had to say "Well if here ain't old Jack Keefe" and then it was good night. Well I suppose I turned into all the colors of the rainbow and I didn't know what to say and then Lefty asked right out loud if I wasn't going to introduce him to the lady and she spoke up and said her name Miss Chase and then I had to say something so I said "Oh I didn't know you was really Miss Chase or I would of acted different but I thought you was somebody else." So she kind of give a funny smile and says "Yes you did" and then all of a sudden I heard little Al's voice right behind hollering "There's daddy" and I looked around and it was Florrie and little Al.

Well Al Florrie come up and kissed me right in front of the whole hotel and the next thing I know the 3 of us was away from Kramer and the dame and Florrie was telling me how she had came down to give me a Xmas supprise and she

Well if here ain't old Jack Keefe (p. 154).

is going to stay about 3 wks. and spend some of the time with her sister over in Beaumont.

Well I took a look just as we was going up in the elevator and Miss Chase was still standing there yet with Kramer and she was looking right at me and I couldn't help from feeling sorry for her the way she looked but a woman her age should ought to know more then start writeing letters to a guy she never seen and maybe this will learn her a lesson and I suppose she can give her sweater to somebody else and maybe Kramer has got it by this time but what he ought to have is a wallop in the jaw for butting in but what can you expect from a left hander.

Well Al I have got a leave off for over Xmas and I am writeing this letter while Florrie is out shopping and she asked me what I wanted for Xmas and I told her a sweater so I won't loose out after all.

Your pal,

JACK.

CAMP LOGAN, Jan. 5.

FRIEND AL: Well Al this may be the last time you will ever hear from me or at least for a long time and maybe never. I'm going over there old pal and something tells me I won't never come back.

I can't tell you what I am going with or when we go or where we sail from because they won't leave us give out none of that dope and all as I can say is that about 30 of us has been picked to fill up a unit and we leave here tomorrow and meet them at the place where we sail from. Well Al its a big honor to be 1 of the men picked and it means they have got a lot of confidence in me and you can bet they are not sending no riff and raff over there but just picked men and I will show them they didn't make no mistake in choosing me.

But its mighty tough to leave Florrie and little Al and I thought Florrie would break her heart when I told her and no wonder. But when its a question of duty I am not the kind that would back out and Florrie wouldn't want me to but its hard all the same.

Well Al I can't waist no more time writeing

to you and I am going to meet Florrie in Houston in a little while and it may be for the last time so I will say good bye to you now and say good bye to Bertha for me and she ought to be thankful she has got a husband that stayed at home and didn't enlist. And if we have good luck and nothing happens to us I will write you once in a while from the other side.

Your pal,

JACK.

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